

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. Please amend claims 2, 5 and 7 so that the current status of all claims is as follows:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (original) A method for reading a micro-discrete indicia on a gemstone, comprising the steps of:  
locating said micro-discrete indicia on said gemstone; and  
reading said micro-discrete indicia using near-field optics.
2. (currently amended) A method according to claim 1 wherein said micro-discrete indicia is ~~located~~ initially located using an eye-loop ~~and/or~~ or a microscope.
3. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein said micro-discrete indicia is located by using predetermined coordinates associated with the indicia on said gemstone.
4. (original) A method according to claim 3 where a document is provided that designates the appropriate coordinates of the micro-discrete indicia of said gemstone.
5. (currently amended) A method according to claim 4 wherein ~~said~~ characteristics of said gemstone used to locate said indicia is selected from one of the following:  
size, type of gemstone, facet, manufacturer, retailer, ~~and/or~~ and owner.
6. (original) A method according to claim 1 wherein said micro-discrete indicia is used for authenticating an occasion of said gemstone.
7. (currently amended) A method according to claim 6 wherein said authentication identifies at least one of the manufacturer, owner, retailer, quality, ~~and/or~~ and type of gemstone.

8. (original) A method according to claim 1 wherein said locating of said indicia on said gemstone is provided by scanning said gemstone.